

MHST 513

RESEARCH METHODS

COURSE OUTLINE



Museum and Heritage Studies programme

**School of Art History, Classics & Religious Studies
Victoria University of Wellington
2006**

the best possible available stock of generalisations about social life ... will be based on a good deal of research, but their inductively-founded character will appear in their failure to approach law-likeness. No matter how well-framed they are the best of them may have to co-exist with counter-examples, since the constant creation of counter-examples is a feature of human life. And we shall never be able to say of the best of them precisely what their scope is. It follows of course that they will not entail well-defined sets of counterfactual conditionals. They will be prefaced not by universal quantifiers but by some such phrase as 'Characteristically and for the most part ...'

A MacIntyre (1981) After Virtue

there are no causes to be grasped with certainty where the act of creating meaning is concerned, only acts, expressions, and contexts to be interpreted. ... These contexts are always *contexts of practice*: it is always necessary to ask what people are *doing* or *trying* to do in what context.

J Bruner (1990) Acts of Meaning

COURSE ORGANISATION

Course Coordinator: Lee Davidson
Room 114, 44 Kelburn Parade
Phone 463 5929
Email: lee.davidson@vuw.ac.nz

Administrator: Sally Reweti-Gould
Room 109, 44 Kelburn Parade
Phone 463 5928

Class Times: Wednesday 10am – 12pm (Full year)

Venue: Room 101, 42 Kelburn Parade

Course notices will be put on the notice board on the ground floor of 44 Kelburn Parade. Please check the notice board regularly for University notices and other useful information.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

Aims

To provide an introduction to social research methodology, including qualitative and quantitative research methods, historical studies, and cultural studies, looking at their application in a variety of contexts related to museums, culture and heritage.

Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- understand the rationale behind the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- choose appropriate methods for particular research settings; and
- understand the principles and practicalities of research management from a variety of perspectives.

By the end of the course each student will have completed a proposal for their thesis research.

513 OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT

- March 1 Introduction to research methods
- March 8 Ethics and perspectives
- March 15 Research and theory
- March 22 Ethical issues in collaborative research with Maori
Guest speaker: Carla Wilson, World Heritage Manager, DOC
- March 29 Library seminar with Jillian Speirs: MHST liaison librarian
Venue: Rankin Brown 901
- April 5 Asking the question/choosing the methodology

MID SEMESTER BREAK

- April 26 Understanding Statistics/ Surveys and questionnaire design
- May 3 Coding and evaluating quantitative data
- May 10 Interviews and Focus Groups
- May 17 Participant Observation/Multi-method Case Studies
- May 24 Historical/Narrative methods/ Evaluating qualitative data
- May 31 Cultural studies methodology

MID YEAR BREAK

- July 12 Visit to Archives New Zealand
- July 19 Visit to Alexander Turnbull Library
- July 26 Thesis seminar – second year students will report on their research-in-progress

The Research Proposal

- August 2 Introduction and overview
- August 9 Background and Objectives
- August 16 Research Design and Methodology

MID SEMESTER BREAK

Sept 6	Costing, Timetable, Significance
Sept 13	Student presentation and discussion of draft research proposals
Sept 20	Research proposal – the finishing touches
Sept 27	Proposal due - no class
Oct 4	Thesis writing
Oct 11	Supervision issues, ethics, where next?

READING

Readings will be handed out in class one week prior to the relevant seminar. Further appropriate readings will be advised where necessary.

Some basic background reading includes:

- Beach, D. (1996) *The Responsible Conduct of Research*
 Bell, C. & Roberts, H. (1984) *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice*.
 Creswell, J.W. (1994) *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*.
 Cryer, P. (1996) *The Research Student's Guide to Success*.
 Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2005) *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*.
 Patton, M. Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*.
 Rountree, K. & Laing, T. (1996) *Writing By Degrees: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses and Research Papers*.
 Sarantakos, S. (1993) *Social research*.
 Seale, C. (Ed.) (2004) *Qualitative research practice*.

ASSESSMENT

This course is internally assessed on the basis of three written assignments. The word lengths, due dates and percentage of the final mark for each are as follows:

Assignment 1:	Ethics & Perspectives (2500 words)	26 April	20%
Assignment 2:	Exploring a Research Topic (3000 words)	19 July	30%
Assignment 3:	Research Proposal (5000 words)	27 Sept	50%

Method of Assessment

Assessment will be criterion referenced. An assessment schedule will be prepared for each assignment and distributed to students indicating the criteria against which the assignment will be assessed and the marks which will be awarded for each element of the work.

All written assignments may be handed in for comment as initial drafts and resubmitted *one further time only* for final grading by **1 November** at the latest. Assignments not

received by the initial due date will not be eligible for resubmission. The only exception will be on medical grounds (including a medical certificate) or in other exceptional circumstances.

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities in examinations and other assessment procedures.

Relationship between assessment and course objectives

The assignments are structured to ensure that by the end of the course the student has completed a research proposal with a well developed research design, including ethical considerations and a sound methodological approach.

WORKLOAD AND TERMS REQUIREMENTS

Workload Guidelines

As a general rule, each paper requires a time commitment equivalent to a full working day (inclusive of teaching or seminar time) for every week of the academic year.

Term Requirements

The minimum course requirements which must be satisfied in order for students to be eligible for assessment for a final grade are:

- completion of all three written assignments;
- attendance at 90% of seminars .

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures contained in the statutes in the VUW website.

The University Statute on Student Conduct and Policy on Staff Conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct

Academic Grievances

If you have any academic problems with your paper you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the Associate Dean (Students) of your Faculty. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Statute which is published on the VUW website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means *anything* that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

Students with Disabilities

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, please contact the Course Co-ordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building:

Telephone: 463-6070

Email: disability@vuw.ac.nz

The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person is in the relevant prospectus or can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, the following staff members will either help you directly or quickly put you in contact with someone who can.

	Staff member	Location
FHSS	Dr Allison Kirkman	Murphy Building, room 407
Law	Kirstin Harvey	Old Govt Building, room 103
Science, and Architecture and Design	Liz Richardson	Cotton Building, room 150
Commerce and Administration	Colin Jeffcoat	Railway West Wing, room 119
Kaiwawao Maori	Liz Rawhiti	Old Kirk, room 007
Manaaki Pihipihinga	Melissa Dunlop	14 Kelburn Pde, room 109D
Victoria International	Matthias Nebel	Rutherford House, room 206

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at:

www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/

Email: student-services@vuw.ac.nz.

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building:

Telephone 463 6983 or 463 6984

Email: education@vuwsa.org.nz.